

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

CORPORAL JOSEPH M. HERNANDEZ

Mr. BAYH. Mr. President, I rise today with a heavy heart to honor the life of CPL Joseph M. Hernandez from Hammond, IN. Joseph was 24 years old when he lost his life on January 9, 2009, from injuries sustained from a roadside bomb attack in Jaldak, Afghanistan. He was a member of the 1st Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment of Hohenfels, Germany.

Today, I join Joseph's family and friends in mourning his death. Joseph will forever be remembered as a loving husband, father, brother, son, and friend to many. Joseph is survived by his wife, Alison; his sons, Jacob and Noah; his brothers, Jesse and Jason; his parents, Elva and Jessie; and a host of other friends and relatives.

Joseph joined the Army in 2005 and had been stationed in Afghanistan for 1 month. Prior to entering the service, Joseph graduated from Mount Carmel High School in Chicago, attended the College of the Holy Cross and had entered the mechanical engineering and biology programs at Purdue University in West Lafayette, IN. Joseph was a man of great faith and an active member of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church of Hammond, where he served as an altar boy and was a member of the choir. Joseph had many passions in life: he was a volunteer at the local animal humane society, and his interests ranged from boxing to model airplanes and vintage cars. Above all, Joseph's greatest passion was his family, who he hoped to take to a Chicago Cubs game at the end of his deployment.

While we struggle to express our sorrow over this loss, we can take pride in the example Joseph set as both a soldier and a father. Today and always, he will be remembered by family, friends and fellow Hoosiers as a true American hero, and we cherish the legacy of his service and his life.

It is my sad duty to enter the name of Joseph M. Hernandez in the RECORD of the U.S. Senate for his service to this country and for his profound commitment to freedom, democracy and peace. I pray that Joseph's family can find comfort in the words of the prophet Isaiah who said, "He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces."

May God grant strength and peace to those who mourn, and may God be with all of you, as I know He is with Joseph.

RURAL LAW ENFORCEMENT
ASSISTANCE ACT OF 2009

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I rise today to express my support as a cosponsor of S. 150, the Rural Law Enforcement Assistance Act of 2009, introduced by my colleague on the Senate Judiciary Committee, Senator LEAHY. As our Nation copes with economic turbulence, we here in Washington are faced with tough decisions regarding

the Federal budget. Back in our home States, State and local legislators are facing their own tough decisions and are examining drastic cuts to budgets that could impact law enforcement services provided to citizens. These cuts are leaving law enforcement administrators wrestling to do more with less. Unfortunately, we are finding out that these administrators are forced with the only choice of serving their public with fewer officers, less money for training and less money for tools and resources for the more than 800,000 men and women who keep our citizens safe from crime. I fear we have only seen the tip of the iceberg that is our present economic state. Large cities and small towns are seeing the possibility of not filling vacant law enforcement officer positions due to the recent budget crisis. In my home State of Utah, with the exception of a few law enforcement agencies, most of the departments patrol rural jurisdictions. Some of the hardest hit areas by this economic downturn are rural communities. Police agencies in these communities often lose out to larger metropolitan areas for consideration of justice assistance grants. Under the present form of the Department of Justice's Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant Program, the sheriff's departments and police departments in Utah have seen a 65-percent decrease in justice assistance grant funding received from this program. These areas have their own challenges—issues such as illicit drug use that are not just unique to cities but transcend city limits and have manifested themselves in rural communities in much the same way they do in urban settings.

Press reports in the preceding weeks have been very grim to say the least. Joblessness is on the rise. The combination of revenue losses and budget shortfalls will see an increased demand for services on the part of these rural agencies. These issues will make it challenging to continue to meet the demands of normal calls for service. According to the chiefs and sheriffs in Utah, because of this economic downturn, the cost of everything is going up, including crime.

If passed, the Rural Law Enforcement Assistance Act would level the playing field by reauthorizing the rural law enforcement assistance grant under the Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant Program. This reauthorization will make agencies located in rural States and populous States with rural areas candidates for this grant assistance. These grants can be used to hire officers, pay for officer training, crime prevention programs, and victim assistance programs. For example, in the coming fiscal year some Utah agencies may not be able to purchase essential items and tools like rape-investigation kits which are critical in the gathering of physical evidence after a victim has been assaulted. Grants awarded under the Rural Law Enforcement Assistance Act

could be used to purchase these kits and other critical tools needed for investigations. As a longtime advocate for victims' rights, I find this troubling that there might be agencies in this country that may not have the necessary budget to purchase essential tools needed to investigate these heinous crimes.

For decades criminologists and economists have debated the link between crime and the economy. Some researchers have concluded that there is a ripple effect from the economy and it radiates out and displays itself in the form of increased calls for service, increased domestic violence, and increased property crimes. Presently, we do not have current crime statistics for 2008, but I will use a less scientific method: it is called listening to the professionals who each and every day answer the calls for police services in these rural areas. They tell me that they are seeing an increase in burglaries, domestic violence, emergency mental health committals, and more calls for service. Some agencies are down in personnel numbers. However, these law enforcement professionals are forging ahead doing the very best they can with whatever means they have. They are not looking at these grants as a free pass to purchase frivolous big-ticket items that have little to do with their agency's mission. These administrators tell me they are hopeful this act will pass so that they can continue to serve the rural communities who have come to expect the most basic of police services as a right guaranteed by the Constitution in "ensuring domestic tranquility."

My colleagues in this Chamber have taken great pains to examine and discuss a way to lead our country out of this crisis and get our economy moving again. We should be scrutinizing Government spending in this tight economy. But I cannot think of a better form of economic stimulus than making justice assistance grants available to rural communities and metropolitan areas alike. However, rural agencies currently find themselves on the outside looking in under the present JAG formula. The reauthorization of the Rural Law Enforcement Assistance Act would give rural agencies a better opportunity at receiving this grant assistance.

In closing, I quote the Greek philosopher Plato who said the following about communities: "The community which has neither poverty nor riches will always have the noblest principles."

This Nation is one large framework of communities and was founded on some of the noblest principles ever recorded in history. Some of our citizens choose a city lifestyle, and some have selected a rural small town life. Crime does not distinguish between urban and rural. The more than 800,000 men and women who make up the law enforcement community that keep our streets